

JAN 31 1940



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Charles V

THE EMPEROR CHARLES V



Decorative Fabrics of Distinction

STROHEIM & ROMANN

730 FIFTH AVENUE at 57th STREET
NEW YORK

CHICAGO
Heyworth Bldg.

BOSTON
Berkeley Bldg.

PHILADELPHIA
Finance Bldg.

LOS ANGELES
Chillis Block

SAN FRANCISCO
Jewelers Bldg.



A 16th century Spanish armchair of the traditional type. A slight ease in the arms and the carved front stretcher distinguish it from other 16th century models which are even more severe.



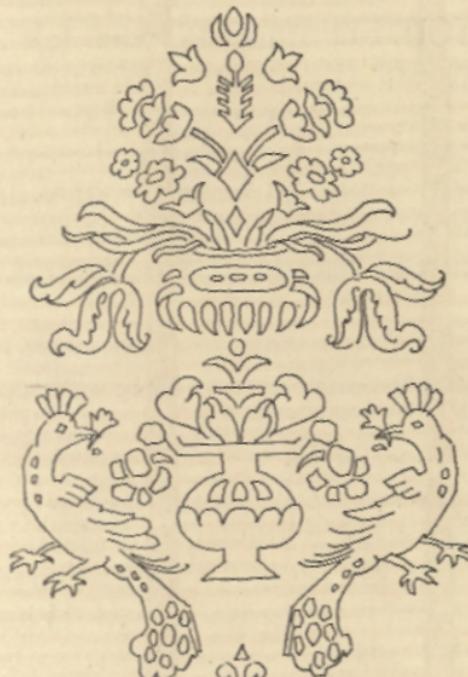
CHARLES I of Spain, better known in history as Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire, was a familiar figure throughout the length and breadth of his vast empire. Through his father, Philip the Handsome, Archduke of Austria, Charles had inherited Austria and Burgundy. Through his mother, Joanna the Mad, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, he inherited Castile and Aragon. As if these hereditary possessions were not enough for the young prince to govern, the sovereignty of the Holy Roman Empire was also bestowed upon him when he was but nineteen years of age.

EARLY reports describe Charles as being colorless, reserved, weak and timid. Yet few monarchs have done more to deserve a lasting reputation for bravery. A great soldier, cool in every crisis, he was proud of his generalship and of his example on the field of battle. At the head of his army, Charles forced the Turks back-

ward down the Danube, conquered Tunis, invaded Provence and crushed the rebellion of Ghent. The whole world stood in awe of the Emperor who could lead his troops in battle and preside over diets and conferences with equal ability.

CHARLES V was by nature plain, even ugly, although as he said, artists usually represented him as being uglier than he really was, and strangers were agreeably disappointed upon seeing him for the first time. When, however, his Spanish subjects first saw him in 1517, it is recorded that they were far from pleased. Charles had been born and educated in Flanders and was a Fleming through and through. Hundreds of his boisterous countrymen accompanied him to Spain intent upon reaping political favors. Experience taught Charles the value of a different policy, and never again did he give like provocation for unpopularity.

CONTACT with various nationalities gave the Emperor a certain versatility. He learned to be dignified with Spaniards, familiar with Flemings and matter-of-fact



Paired birds and a vase with floral ornament form the pattern on this early Toledan fabric.



The field is a gold tissue and the pattern is of green velvet—a very striking combination.

with Italians. His Spanish capital became a decidedly cosmopolitan center. Wealth from the New World was bringing power and prestige. The reign of Charles V marks the climax of Spain's ascendancy.

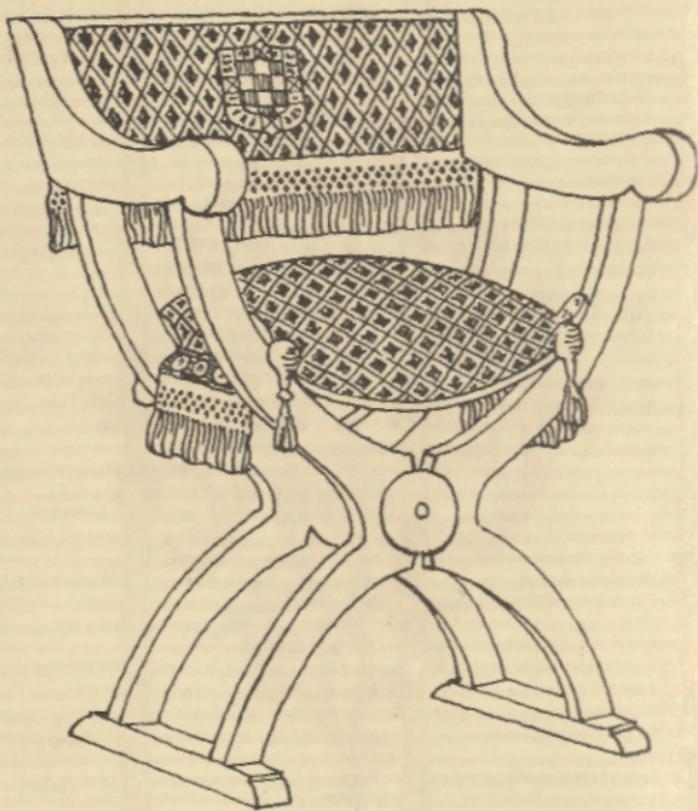
A DECIDED impetus was felt in the field of the decorative and fine arts during the 16th century. For centuries Spain had been famous for her excellent craftsmen. Their superiority of workmanship is nowhere more apparent than in the furniture and textiles of this period.

SPANISH furniture craftsmen, confident of their skill, were able to produce a type of chair which was extremely beautiful by reason of its very simplicity. Chairs of the *frailero* type were rectangular in construction as were Italian chairs of the period, but there are several characteristics by which we may know them. The frame was severe, even rigid. Legs were straight and underbraced, with runner feet not as common as in the Italian type. Carving, when used, was limited to the front stretcher. Highly ornamental fire-gilt nailheads, one of the distinguishing marks of Spanish chairs, fastened the coverings of the chairs to their frames. Fabrics were usually used over a leather foundation for the purpose of durability and the seats were swung hammock-like across the chair frames.



A Spanish cut velvet of the 16th century.

COLLAPSIBLE chairs, made to be carried about from place to place on pack mules were popular. They were always made with floor runners. Another



The X shaped armchair was popular during the 16th century. This one has a cushion and back of cut velvet in a minute diagonal pattern.

type of chair was the X shaped *sillon de cadera*, a chair which was also in vogue in Italy, and which is often called a Dantesque chair. The wood for these chairs

always had to be carefully selected, matched and seasoned. Walnut, oak and chestnut were the woods oftenest used in Spanish furniture.

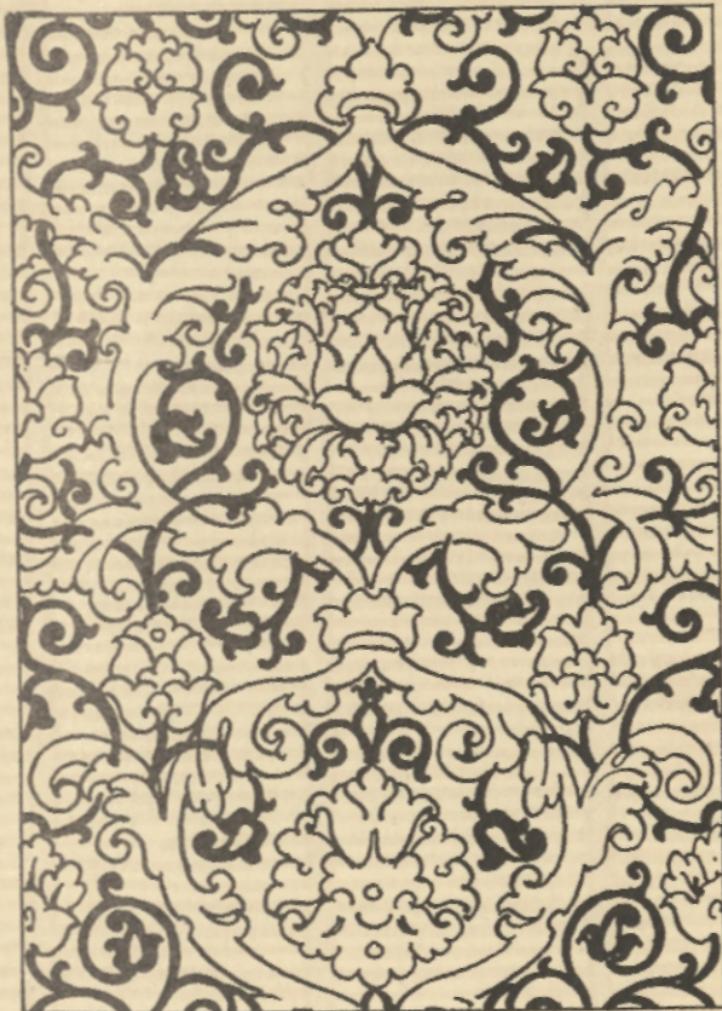
SUMPTUOUS fabrics relieved the austerity of these simple chair forms—plain and cut velvets, damasks, embroidered and appliquéd panels, and tissues of gold. Brilliant and glowing colors, a Moorish legacy, predominated. There were reds,—ruby, cherry, wine and plum; blues which varied from deep indigo to cerulean; greens and yellows in wonderful variety. An extravagant use of gold enhanced the richness of these colors.

PATTERNS were varied, following traditional trends. Granada and the older looms were still supplying silks woven “à la Moresque” and silks with paired animal patterns which had originated in the East and entered Spain by way of Sicily. Minute diagonal patterned fabrics enjoyed wide popularity before the vogue for the large floral patterns asserted itself. Velvets quilted in quatrefoil, trefoil and lozenge forms were common. Various descendants

of the pomegranate pattern were especially beautiful. Some of these were probably woven in Italy from Spanish patterns. Others were undoubtedly woven in Spain by Italian craftsmen.

HERALDIC escutcheons always played an important part in the decorative arts of Spain. The royal arms of Castile and Leon were immensely popular. There was the pomegranate motif of Granada, and the mulberry tree which figured on the escutcheon of the city of Madrid. There were family escutcheons and cardinal's escutcheons, there was the monogram of the Virgin, Crosses of the various orders, the collar of the Golden Fleece, and the ubiquitous double-headed eagle of Charles V.

WHILE Spanish designers of the mid-sixteenth century turned to Italy for their textile patterns, it was to Flanders that they looked for inspiration in their tapestry weaving. Indeed most of the tapestry weavers in Spain were Flemings. It was an art in which Charles V was especially interested. It is said that when the Emperor accompanied his troops to Tunis,



A gold brocade of the High Renaissance. The pattern is a descendant of earlier pomegranate patterns.

he had in his retinue a Flemish master weaver who was to gather material for a series of tapestries perpetuating his exploits. The series was later woven in Granada by eighty Flemish weavers, and it still forms part of the most treasured possessions of the royal collection of Madrid.

CIRCUMSTANCES made warfare play a conspicuous part in the reign of Charles V. Like his contemporaries, Francis I of France and Henry VIII of England, however, he displayed keen enjoyment and appreciation of the beautiful things which the Renaissance was producing.

WHEN Charles V finally retired to the seclusion of a monastery at Yuste, he carried with him a notable collection of the finest books and paintings, clearly indicative of his excellent taste.

Charles V was "*every inch an emperor*".



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